

Important Advances in Clinical Medicine

Epitomes of Progress -- Dermatology

The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association presents the following inventory of items of progress in Dermatology. Each item, in the judgment of a panel of knowledgeable physicians, has recently become reasonably firmly established, both as to scientific fact and important clinical significance. The items are presented in simple epitome and an authoritative reference, both to the item itself and to the subject as a whole is generally given for those who may be unfamiliar with a particular item. The purpose is to assist the busy practitioner, student, research worker or scholar to stay abreast of these items of progress in Dermatology which have recently achieved a substantial degree of authoritative acceptance, whether in his own field of special interest or another.

The items of progress listed below were selected by the Advisory Panel to the Section on Dermatology of the California Medical Association and the summaries were prepared under its direction.

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Liver Disease, Psoriasis, and Methotrexate

Methotrexate, called the "most effective treatment for psoriasis that has been used to date" (Van Scott) has many potential disadvantages which have been stressed in recent editorials. There are now reports of seven cases of cirrhosis associated with methotrexate given for psoriasis. Liver biopsy studies on patients with psoriasis who have not been given methotrexate have been reported from Sweden, France and Italy. There is a high incidence of fatty liver in these persons, and a higher-than-expected incidence of cirrhosis. Abuse of alcohol may play a part in many, but the finding of cirrhosis in a 13-year-old girl with untreated psoriasis raises the question of a possible direct association of psoriasis and pre-cirrhosis or cirrhosis. Traditional liver

function tests, including BSP, may be inadequate to detect such changes. Some authorities are now recommending wider use of liver biopsy before and during methotrexate therapy for psoriasis.

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Methotrexate and psoriasis (Editorial). JAMA 209:1898, 1969

Psoriasis, methotrexate, and cirrhosis (Editorial). JAMA 212:314-315, 1970

Berge G, Lundquist A, Rorsman H, et al: Liver biopsy in psoriasis. Brit J Derm 82:250-253, 1970

Antimalarial Drugs in Dermatology

The use of the 4-aminoquinoline compounds chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine in dermatology continues to be valid. The principal indi-